

Comments Form

We welcome your comments on any aspect of the Interim Report, and particularly on those issues outlined in the next steps chapter, chapter 9.

The information you send to us may be shared with colleagues within the Department for Education and Skills and selected organisations involved in the development and implementation of our proposals. It may be published as part of a summary of comments made on the Interim Report. We will assume that you are content for us to do this. If you are replying by email, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by your organisation's information technology system. If you do not wish for your comments to be published as part of a summary, then please request this in the main text of your response.

We may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available on public request, individual responses. This does include your comments unless you tell us that you wish them to remain confidential.

Please insert 'X' if you want us to keep your response confidential

Name

Professor Richard Hudson

Organisation (if applicable)

Committee for Linguistics in Education

Address

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Please insert 'X' in **one** of the following category boxes that best describes you as a respondent

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sectoral organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regional organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> Local organisation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subject association | <input type="checkbox"/> Representative body |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational institution | <input type="checkbox"/> Training provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please use this space to provide a more specific description.

The committee (CLIE) was set up in 1980 by the two main professional associations for linguistics in British universities: the Linguistics Association of Great Britain and the British Association of Applied Linguistics. CLIE also includes representatives from all the main professional associations concerned with language education, and its members have provided advice on language education and MFL. Like other public statements from CLIE, this has been approved by the committee and its two sponsoring organisations.

Comments: (You can continue on additional sheets if necessary)

CLIE comments to the Tomlinson Committee, 10/05/2004

Our principle comments concern the proposed separation of **communication skills** from the **subject English**. However we should also like to underline the crucial importance of **foreign languages** at this age, so we ask you to ensure that any structures make it attractive to include some element of foreign language learning, however varied this provision may be.

a. We agree that communications skills are vital and that those who have not reached the target level at KS3 should have further support. However we see a contradiction between accepting GCSE grade C as a relevant criterion (para 133) while denying that GCSE is "a good proxy for communication skills" (para 45).

b. We are concerned at the idea of separating skills training from "theoretical, critical and conceptual" study. The thrust of the Literacy Strategy at KS1-3 has been to base literacy skills on understanding, and we believe this is the right approach. According to the Strategy, the best way to develop writing skills is to help children to develop explicit understanding of the linguistic tools they are using. Your Interim Report seems to suggest a very different approach in which skills are divorced from understanding. This may not in fact be your intention, but it will almost certainly result unless you spell out more clearly how theory is to be subdivided into those parts which are relevant to skills and those that are not.

c. We are concerned that your proposed division between communication skills and English aligns "skills" with active learning and "subject English" with passive study; or could even leave language on the "skills" side and nothing but literature on the "English" side. Either of these would be against the spirit of the Literacy Strategy, which emphasises the importance of active learning and of careful reading in the development of writing skills. Again this may not be your intention but we hope you will be able to exclude it explicitly in your final report.

d. We see three different ways in which communication skills could be separated from the subject English more satisfactorily than in your Preliminary Report.

1. In terms of **level**. Communication skills training is just for those who haven't yet reached the target level, so it uses whatever teaching methods are appropriate, including approaches that might call "theoretical". English teaches both "theory" and skills at a higher level, as it does in the present GCSE pattern.

2. In terms of **content**. Communication skills training applies to everyone, and, just as in the KS4, it aims to bring everyone to an even higher level using whatever methods, theoretical or otherwise, are appropriate. English is a more academic and less skills-oriented study of language similar to parts of the current A-level English Language.

3. An even bolder proposal would be to replace the subject "English" by "**Language**", which covers not only English but other languages as well, and would provide a bridge between English and foreign languages. Communication skills could remain as in 2, though logically they should include skills in foreign languages as well as in English.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not normally acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you put an X in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply



Please send comments to the address shown below by **11 May 2004**

Send by post to: **Consultation Unit, Department for Education and Skills, Level 2a, Castle View House, Runcorn, WA7 2GJ.**

Or by email to: 14-19reform@dfes.gsi.gov.uk